

THE MYSTERY  
AND MAGIC OF  
THE  
EUCCHARIST

REVISED EDITION

STEPHAN A. HOELLER

As light bears witness to the principle of light, or the movement of a tree branch bears witness to the wind, so the Seven Sacraments are the manifesting agents of the mysteries which in the words of St. Clement "are delivered mystically."

The ordinary, human consciousness cannot find anything within itself that would cause man to perform a mystery. It can only do so when it is seized by the mystery.

Once the Seven Sacraments are interpreted, understood and practiced in the light of the Gnosis, their grace and redeeming power will grow and expand to cover the whole Christian world with its blessing. May those who recognize this possibility devote their labors with increasing force to this great task and may their efforts be crowned with the success they so richly deserve!

*Stephan A. Hoeller*





# THE MYSTERY AND MAGIC OF THE EUCHARIST



# THE MYSTERY AND MAGIC OF THE EUCHARIST

STEPHAN A. HOELLER

REVISED EDITION





# CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	<i>iii</i>
---------------	------------

## INTRODUCTION:

The Gnostic Renaissance .....	<i>v</i>
The Gnosis of the Sacraments.....	<i>ix</i>
What is the Eucharist?.....	<i>xvii</i>

## THE HOLY EUCHARIST EXPLAINED:

Invocation, Asperges & Canticle.....	<i>I</i>
The Confiteor, Absolution, Censing & Introit .....	<i>2</i>
The Kyrie Eleison.....	<i>4</i>
The Gloria .....	<i>5</i>
The Prayers Known As Collects .....	<i>6</i>
The Lesson Also Known as the Epistle .....	<i>8</i>
The Gospel.....	<i>9</i>
The Credo or Act of Gnosis.....	<i>10</i>
The Offertorium.....	<i>12</i>
The Second Censing & The Lavabo.....	<i>13</i>
The Orate Fratres, Sursum Corda, Preface & Sanctus .....	<i>15</i>
Invocation of the Holy Spirit, Prayer of Consecration, & Commemoration of the Saints.....	<i>16</i>
The Epiklesis, Consecration & Elevation Of The Elements .....	<i>18</i>
The Breaking of the Host & The Gnostic's Prayer .....	<i>19</i>
The Salutation of Peace & The Communion .....	<i>20</i>

## THE HOLY EUCHARIST EXPLAINED (CONT'D):

The Communio & Closing Prayers .....	22
The Dismissal.....	23
The Final Benediction .....	25

## SACRED VESSELS & VESTMENTS USED IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST:

Sacred Vessels.....	27
Objects Used for the Sacred Vessels .....	28
Vestments Worn by the Celebrant Priest.....	29
The Colors of Mass Vestments .....	31
Objects Used in the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist .....	32
Plan of the Sanctuary .....	33
Glossary of Terms .....	35

## APPENDIX:

The Gnosis of the Eucharist .....	43
The Psychology of the Mass: The Jungian View .....	51
Afterword .....	59

## FOREWORD

SOME YEARS AGO the task devolved upon me to author a small, privately printed and circulated monograph entitled, "The Holy Eucharist Explained," in which I attempted to portray the Holy Eucharist, or Mass, as a sacred mystery-drama designed to exalt the worshiper to the sublime condition of divine ecstasy. Since then, repeated requests have come forth from readers and would-be readers indicating a need for a work of a similar, though perhaps more detailed content.

The present treatise is an attempt to respond to these requests and to supply the interested public with at least a modicum of information regarding the Divine Mystery of the Eucharist from the point of view of contemporary Gnosticism. In addition to the chapters "The Holy Eucharist Explained," and "What is the Eucharist?" which comprised the earlier booklet, and which are now published in a greatly revised and corrected form, an extensive glossary of terms has now been included, as well as a number of essays which were originally published as study texts within the "Gnostic Papers," in connection with a class I conducted in Gnostic philosophy in 1971-72.

It is my fervent hope that this small work will contribute to an increased interest on the part of Gnostic and esoteric students in the Holy Eucharist, and that persons who revere the Christian Mysteries may discover a deeper meaning in the sacraments than has hith-

erto been apparent to them. Above all, I pray that my efforts may succeed in bringing them into some inward harmony with the eternal cosmic and mystical ritual of universal being, of which the sacraments are a part and of which it has been written by our fathers in Gnosis:

*The twelve dance on high. Amen.*

*The whole on high hath part in our dancing. Amen.*

*Whoso danceth not,*

*knoweth not what cometh to pass. Amen.*

✠ Stephan A. Hoeller

*Tau Stephanus I*

Sophia Gnostic Center

Hollywood, California

Feast of St. Esclarmonde, and

the Holy Albigensian Martyrs

1973

## INTRODUCTION

# THE GNOSTIC RENAISSANCE

AS INDICATED by the steadily increasing number of scholarly works on Gnosticism and by the unprecedented interest evidenced on the part of theologians and the general public regarding the beliefs and practices of the Christian Gnosis of the first three centuries, Christendom today stands on the threshold of a Gnostic Renaissance. Far from being a "Faith Forgotten," as G. R. S. Mead named it in the early part of the 20th century, the Gnosis is rapidly becoming a "Faith Rediscovered." Biblical archaeology and liberal theology have entered into a unique and promising alliance with the most enlightened representatives of modern psychology, and due to their united efforts Christians of many churches in all walks of life have begun to study the long forgotten heritage of the wise knowers of the early Church. The conquering lion of truth has again sounded his royal roar, and according to all appearances, Christendom is beginning to listen.

Even the largest and most conservative branches of Christendom, including the mighty church of Rome, have begun to respond, after their own fashion and within the context of their limited and limiting theology, to the external challenge coming mostly from astute theologians and enlightened psychologists who are at present engaged in ushering in a Gnostic Renaissance. Needless to say, the advances which one may expect in these quarters are not likely to be of a rapid or spec-

tacular nature, nor are they likely to lead to a repudiation of the decrees and pronouncements of old Church councils which have led to the virtual erasing of the Gnostic tradition from the face of the earth. It is difficult to conceive that any truly significant changes favoring the Gnostic Renaissance could take place on a large enough scale within the large denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. The implementation of the Gnostic Renaissance within the worship of present-day Christians will be the task of small, independent groups, possessing a liberal theological framework and unhampered by the dead-weight of many centuries of erroneous decisions and falsely defined dogmas. The future belongs to the "Underground Church."

According to all indications, it will be largely up to such underground religious groups to attempt the "magnum opus" of transmuting the base metal of medieval Catholicism into the shining gold of the Gnostic Church of the Future. Why—the reader might ask—involve Catholicism at all?

The reason is fairly simple. The Protestant Reformation has more or less successfully banished from its churchly progeny the one and only vital component of all Christian practice, namely the sacramental system of historic Catholic Christianity. Without the sacraments, Christianity is not unlike a corpse from which life has fled. On the other hand, it is fairly evident that Catholicism, as the world has come to know it, is unaware of its own true spiritual power, and is unable to recover its mystical and gnostic heritage. The reforming zeal and renovating ferment within

the Roman Catholic Church in recent decades merely serves to prove the above contention. The mystic power of the sacraments is not more clearly recognized in the Church of Rome today than hundreds of years ago, and mini-skirted nuns shrieking at guitar-masses are not likely to restore the Gnosis of old to the post-Vatican II Church.

The Gnostic Renaissance must be extended and expanded so that it will not be confined to the study of the archaeologist and the Bible scholar, but that it may include the true revival of the mysteries of the Christian mythos. It is commonly recognized that the Gnosis represents the missing link between the religious tradition of classical antiquity and Christianity; but unlike the missing link of biology, this link has now been discovered. The Christian sacraments must be understood and practiced after the fashion of the tradition of the Mystery Schools, of which Gnostic Christianity was a true representative. At the time of the beginnings of the Christian Era, some of the Mystery Schools were still in existence in Egypt and parts of Asia, and their influence is evident in the development of the seven sacraments of the Church.

The world today is in great need of the revival of the mysteries. As light bears witness to the principle of light, or the movement of a tree branch bears witness to the wind, so the Seven Sacraments are the manifesting agents of the mysteries which in the words of St. Clement "are delivered mystically." The sacramental system which derives its origin from tradition rather than from the dead letter of the Bible, links modern sacramental Christianity in a direct manner with the

Gnostics and through them with the ancient mystery schools.

The science of the soul is not a matter of scholastic theology or Biblical exegesis; now as ever it belongs to the world of the mystics and knowers. The sacraments are Christendom's Jacob's ladder extending to the stars upon which the angels ascend and descend. This ladder, with its seven mystic rungs leads man by degrees, of inner attainment to the celestial abode from which he came. Sacramental Grace is a mighty and supremely real force because it proceeds from the root of consciousness and is operated by the most deeply rooted archetypes of the psyche. Similarly, the true Gnosis is both mighty and immortal, which is why it survives through the ages, until the time comes for it to be restored.

Once the Seven Sacraments are interpreted, understood and practiced in the light of the Gnosis, their grace and redeeming power will grow and expand to cover the whole Christian world with its blessing. Like a seed, which lies dormant under the snow, waiting for the time to come round for it to be revived, Sacramental Christianity may yet rise triumphantly from the state of suspended animation to which ignorant churchmen of many denominations have condemned it. May those who recognize this possibility devote their labors with increasing force to this great task and may their efforts be crowned with the success they so richly deserve!



# INTRODUCTION

## THE GNOSIS

### OF THE SACRAMENTS

THE HISTORIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH, as it existed before the distortion effected in its worship by the Reformation, possessed seven sacraments. A great deal of implicit and a certain amount of explicit evidence seems to indicate that the seven historic sacraments have a closer link to the Gnostic tradition of early Christianity than to the Constantinian Church, that arrogated to itself the titles of "Orthodox" and "Catholic," and drove the Gnostic Christians out of the fold of the Church. The sacraments of the early church were instituted in accordance with the age-old pattern of the mystery schools. The sacraments were called mysteries by the early Christians and are still so named by the Eastern Orthodox Church. Outward signs of inward spiritual grace have been noted in the initiation rituals of Egypt, Greece and Rome. There exists an unwritten tradition among the better informed of the Eastern Church to the effect that the sacramental system of Christianity was strongly influenced by the ceremonies of the Egyptian Mysteries and that the Egyptian Gnostics were responsible for the adaptation of these ancient mysteries to the Christian framework. The word *sacramentum* itself is of pagan Roman origin, having been the technical term denoting certain types of oaths and pledges current in ancient Rome.

The ancient Gnostics obviously saw no contradiction existing between their esoteric philosophy and their

sacramental or ritual practices. Such a contradiction exists only in the minds of modern students, who for some reason or other are much attached to philosophical discussions and books, but are disdainful of ritual. Actually the need for sacraments is evident in the very principles of esoteric philosophy and cosmogony.

The essential nature of the Universe and of man is a mystery. The sacraments are the outward signs of this mystery that could not evidently or substantially be manifested without the agency of such a sign. The inward mystery depends on an outward sign to become manifest outwardly. It is thus in life and it must be thus in the life of the aspirant toward Gnosis. Beginning with the Protestant Reformation, however, an idea arose in religious thinking which seems to propound that religious truths can be apprehended merely in the form of abstract, intellectual statements and that therefore, rituals and sacraments are superfluous to the true Christian. Many modern pseudo-gnostic, i.e. metaphysical and quasi-mystical writings and teachings, echo this same sentiment with certain modifications.

The Gnostics of every age and clime have found that abstract ideas must be made concrete within the field of vision of the individual, and that such ideas are rendered more easily assimilable when presented in the form of symbols, instead of merely as intellectual formulations. Just as the human spirit and soul depend on the physical body to express their nature in concrete form, so ritual gives the philosophy of religion its concrete expression so that everyone may grasp it. Ritual is, in fact, concretized truth, penetrating our consciousness through the avenue of all our senses at one and the

same time. The great modern Gnostic, Dr. Carl G. Jung, repeatedly voiced his conviction that religious rituals speak directly to the deeper layer of man's soul, and that therein they tend to vitalize certain inspiring forces.

The Mysteries portrayed the Divine Self of man under the figure of the hero or heroine of a drama. With the advent of Christianity, when, as St. Augustine of Hippo aptly stated, "the true faith, which already existed became known as Christian," the role of the ritual hero was occupied by the figure of Jesus the Christ. There is one significant difference, however, and it can be rightly said to be a tragic one. There is no evidence indicating that any of the initiates of the Mysteries of the "Pagans" ever accepted the stories in the great sacred dramas as being literal truth. No cultured Greek or Roman ever sank to the depths of benighted ignorance wherein he could or would have believed that the gods and goddesses whose lives, deaths, and resurrections were symbolically portrayed in the mysteries ever physically carried out their exploits on earth. Only the Christians, particularly after the fateful Third Century, managed to lose the light of the Gnosis to such an astonishing extent that they actually came to accept the queer notion that the sacraments were practiced in commemoration of an alleged historical event, or series of events, rather than being celebrated for the purpose of internalizing the external ritual into an inward soul-experience.

The purpose of the sacraments from the point of view of Gnosticism is not the commemoration of the alleged events in the life of Jesus. The birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus must become internalized

mystical experiences or initiatory awakenings within the soul of every individual. As Angelus Silesius, the medieval mystic, said: "The Cross at Golgotha standeth up in vain, unless in thee it be erected again." It is always the same story. We come into this world to manifest the ancient truth, central to all religion, that we can conquer death by the conscious liberation of our own innate Divinity. This transforming Magnum Opus (great work) of the Gnosis cannot be accomplished by mere intellectual exercises or purely inward directed meditations; it requires the outward means through which an inward mystery reveals itself and is accomplished. This outward form, containing an inward mystery, is a sacrament.

The sacraments of historical Christianity, as descended from the practices of the ancient Gnostics, are seven in number. Their mystical and Gnostic character may be aptly alluded to in the following brief description:

## I. BAPTISM

Baptism utilizes the element of water, and is associated with the planet Moon. It is the symbol of the re-birth of the Gnostic into the new life of the mysteries, as distinguished from the common pursuits of the unenlightened person, who is unaware of Gnosis. It has also a relationship to what some call the first astral exit of the neophyte-initiate, the first step on the path of overcoming the influence of the earth. It may be useful to recall as an analogy that the first astronauts to travel to other planets landed on the moon. This sacrament relates to the emotions overcoming matter.

## 2. CONFIRMATION

Confirmation affirms the ability of man to think in a creative manner and, through the power of the enlightened intellect to overcome the binding influence of the lower emotions. It belongs to the planet of the mind, which is Mercury.

## 3. PENANCE

Penance (or absolution) symbolizes our ability to fight the good fight against the innate tendencies of the lower nature toward sin and perversity. It is related to the planet of battle, Mars. It reminds us of the fact that the victory of life is not won without a battle, indeed not without many battles.

## 4. THE EUCHARIST

The Holy Eucharist, or the Sacrament of the Altar, in many ways the chief of all the sacraments, is related to the kingly planet Jupiter, named after the king of the gods. It symbolizes the royal power of the initiate to partake of the essence of Divinity, to share in the holy power that comes from on high. In ancient days the king was often regarded as an embodiment of Divinity and was made to undergo the sacrifice of death for his people. The mythological and mystical idea that Christ the King died for us, and that we eat his flesh and drink his blood for our salvation is derived from the mythos of the dying king.

## 5. MATRIMONY

Matrimony is the supreme sacrament of attraction, of the higher emotions as characterized by love, and is,

therefore, connected with the planet Venus. It embodies the truth that the emotions, and even passions, can never be killed out, but must be raised to a higher form of their expression. Thus, mere attraction and infatuation can be made to expand into love, and become a vehicle of the cohesive power of the cosmos.

## 6. HOLY ORDERS

Being the vehicle through which the authority is given and acquired to spread the light, the warmth and power of the entire system of the Mysteries of the Christian Gnosis, is naturally put under the sign of the Sun. The priesthood of the Gnosis represents the power to send out the rays of the divine glory upon all, the just and the unjust alike. It is unworthy of a Gnostic to refuse the grace of the sacraments to anyone, even though he knows full well that the recipient will profit by it only in accordance with his own capacity to receive it. Freely the Gnostic receives and freely he must give.

## 7. EXTREME UNCTION AND HEALING

This sacrament deals with the last of the enemies of man, namely death. Since illness and death are the great agents of fate, the taskmasters of our existence, this sacrament is connected to the restrictive and didactic planet Saturn. Contrary to the euphemistic and self-deceiving tendencies of our materialistic world, we all must come to terms with death. Death does exist, it is not an illusion. It is true that man's true, divine self is deathless, but our human personality to which we are so greatly attached, dies as surely as the sun sets every night. "*Memento Mori*," (Remember Death) said the ancients,

and they were right. The existential crisis called death is an important experience for the soul. We ought to reflect over it and derive benefits from our reflections. One does not learn anything by ignoring facts of life. It is an holy event, and symbolic of the movements of the wheel of Fate to which we are all bound until we attain to the liberation of the true, Divine Gnosis.

\* \* \*

SUCH IS THE SUBLIME SYSTEM of the Seven Mysteries, which like the ladder of the Patriarch Jacob, joins the world of men with that of the Gods. Each of the Sacraments is a rung upon which the ascending and descending Angels of the Holy One rest on their journey from eternity to eternity.

Like rungs of a ladder the Sacraments are related to each other in an intimate way. The Sacrament of the Eucharist derives much of its power from its origin within one of the sublimest rites of the Egyptian and Greek mysteries. In these mysteries there was a twofold initiation symbolized by bread and wine respectively, or by flesh and blood. The rebirth in the flesh, (bread) stood for the purification of the lower self, while the baptism of blood stood for the infusion into the human nature of the divine. Outside of the two most often quoted passages of the Bible (Luke, xxii: 19-20, and John, vi: 53-6) dealing with the subject of the Eucharist, this is most clearly evident in the statement of Christ to Nicodemus:

Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

The sacraments are some of the chief ways in which the effective power of the Gnosis is released; but only those who know the Truth (Gnosis) will be made free by them.



# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS THE EUCHARIST?

THE FOLLOWING is not meant to be an exhaustive or definitive treatise on the meaning of the ritual of the Eucharist. Its primary objective is that of supplying the individual worshiper with a simple guide, enabling him or her to follow the actions and words of the Mass with a certain degree of understanding according to what, for want of a more descriptive term, we might call Modern Gnosticism.

The thoughts and suggestions contained in the following pages are offered in the hope of giving understanding where there is now misunderstanding. However, it is the intention of the writer to make it clear at the outset that his interpretation can at best never be more than food for thought, study and devotion. One can never understand the Mass by way of the intellect alone. Being a mystery it must be understood mystically, using the highest faculties resident in our souls. The mind has rightly been called "the slayer of the real." When we mistake the imperfect understanding of the mind for the absolutely realized knowledge of the soul, we deprive ourselves of the Divine Gnosis. At the same time, it must be remembered that, as St. Clement pointed out, the Divine Gnosis has as its counterpart the Human Gnosis, which is supplied by the mind.

Words and analogies communicate only such human knowledge. In these pages we, of necessity, are therefore

restricted to the realm of Human Gnosis, but we hope and pray that Divine Gnosis will follow.

Many persons, particularly within the so-called New Age-New Thought-Metaphysical field, can see no use for ceremony, ritual, and prayer, and tend to dismiss the entire subject as so much superstition. The practice of a sacramental form of worship by occult, theosophical and mystically inclined persons appears most incongruous to some. It is easy indeed to say there is no need for ceremony and ritual in the life of the aspirant. It is also easy to state that mystical truths can be understood without ritual. However this may be, in our experience we find that abstract ideas must be made concrete within our own field of vision and activity, and that their assimilation is made easier when presented symbolically rather than in the form of mere intellectual statements.

In the ancient world that preceded the so-called Christian Era, the transforming value of ritual was well known. The Mysteries, without exception, consisted of elaborately devised ritual dramas so contrived as to intensify the spiritual growth of the initiate. In their dramatic presentations, the Mysteries portrayed the Divine Self in all men under the figure of the hero or heroine. Usually these plays were about a hero-figure identified with one of the many gods of the then prevailing religious system.

The participant in the mysteries experienced reminiscences of spiritual life and death from the depths of his own soul. These memories reinforced glimmerings of understanding, and caused the soul of the participant to stir and finally to become inwardly identified with the divine hero presented to his gaze. Thus the

life, death and resurrection of the gods and goddesses in the mysteries was transformed into the internalized soul-experiences of the persons participating in the rites. Their souls were released while still incarnate in the body and rose, like the fabled phoenix, from the tomb of materiality.

The great work of the Mysteries was the manifestation in actual experience of the ancient truth, central to all religion, that man can conquer spiritual death by conscious liberation of his own innate Divinity. All this was accomplished within the confines of an expertly devised and superbly executed ritual drama.

The religion of the early Gnostic Church was not essentially different from that of the Mysteries described above. Truth being one, its expressions are also bound to proceed along similar lines. In the Old Testament we find countless elements of the traditional mystery drama, and numerous scholars have suggested that some books of the Old Testament, particularly the books of Job and Genesis, were originally presented in the form of religious drama.

The Church, in its early days, proceeded very much along the lines laid down by the Mysteries, which were universally practiced among all the peoples inhabiting the ancient world; the only significant difference being that it substituted the mythological figure of Jesus for that of the various ancient gods who served as heroes in the mystery dramas.

Catholic Christians today hold, and rightly so, that the prayers and ceremonies of the Mass represent a pictorial dramatization of the life of Jesus from the Incarnation to the Ascension and the coming of the Holy Ghost. Pope

Innocent II, speaking of the Mass, said:

The order of the Mass is arranged upon a plan so well conceived that everything done by Jesus Christ or concerning Him, from his Incarnation to His Ascension, is there largely contained either in words or in actions, wonderfully presented.

What the learned Pope, and with him the entire Church of the post-Nicene period, left unsaid is the undeniable fact that Jesus Christ, *whose story is ritually re-enacted in the Mass, is not only an historical personage in time and space, but also a typical hero-god after the immemorial fashion of the mystery drama of all ages.* The efficacy of this Christian mystery drama does not depend upon the historical accuracy of its story any more than the rites of Eleusis depended on the historicity of Persephone, their chief heroine.

The Gnostic Fathers of the Church did not waste their time and energy arguing about the alleged material events in the life of their ritual hero; indeed such arguments would have seemed as pointless to them as it might have seemed to a learned Greek to try and prove that Zeus, Ceres, Aphrodite and the other divine heroes and heroines physically carried on their exploits atop Mount Olympus. In their dramatic presentations, all the Mysteries, including the Christian, portrayed the Divine Self under the figure of the hero or heroine. It matters not at all whether these figures ever lived as physical entities on earth.

The suggestion that the historical figure of Jesus is relatively of lesser relevance to the holy Eucharist and its purposes will, of course, be totally unacceptable to

those who are unable to distinguish between physical fact and non-physical reality. Yet most of the people engaged in violent protest against this statement think nothing of enjoying a play by Shakespeare or a Hollywood movie in which the author makes use of historical names and places, and, by taking the wildest liberties with the historical facts, actually creates a pseudo-historical drama for the instruction and entertainment of his audience. Did King Richard III ever pronounce the actual words put into his mouth by the renowned English dramatist, or Scarlett O'Hara ever in fact sweep down the staircase, as portrayed in the great film scene, to greet Rhett Butler, in real history? Who knows? Moreover, who cares? The degree of instruction, exhilaration and inspiration gained by countless thousands of people drawn from these and other plays is by no means affected by the lack of a fully authentic, historical basis for the drama. It is our contention that the principle operative in the case of secular drama is equally, *and even more* applicable to the sacred mystery drama from whence, in fact, all secular theatre is derived in the first instance. Let us remember that *the Mass is a mystery drama, not essentially different from the corresponding dramas of the Greek, Roman and other ancient mysteries, and the efficacy of its ritual does not depend upon any figure or event in physical history.*

The most solemn activity of all the Christian churches which have preserved in a vestigial form the original character of their system of worship, is the service of the Mass, or, as it is sometimes called, the Divine liturgy or Eucharist. It is a mystical event, uniting the community of the faithful, so that they joined to one another,

*are made one with God*, when at the climax of the Mass, each receives the body and the blood of Christ, the ritual hero, under the earthly forms of bread and wine. As the purpose of our earthly lives is to become one with God, so that of the Mass is to lead us step-by-step to this union by ritual means.

In order to accomplish this exalted purpose, the Mass consists of many processes. Some of these are physical, others are emotional, others are mental, and still others are what we might call spiritual. All are going on at the same time and with perfect co-ordination. One of the first men to call attention to this in modern times was the late Bishop C. W. Leadbeater, who, in his noted work, *The Science of the Sacraments*, shared with the world the results of observations which he, as a seer, made in connection with the Mass.

Through the application of his clairvoyant faculties, Bishop Leadbeater observed the mechanical *modus operandi* of the Mass which, since it involves many processes not evident to the physical senses, are not generally known to either priests or lay folk. The present writer has no reason to question the information made known by this eminent and sincere seer. At the same time, it is only fair to point out that the late Bishop's teachings concerning the unseen forces in the Mass are not of crucial relevance to the considerations contained in this treatise. For these and other reasons we shall not repeat here any of the material present in *The Science of the Sacraments*, which, still being available to the reading public, might be considered interesting reading for lay persons, and recommended study material for clergy.

The Mass is not merely a powerful medium for occult forces penetrating the physical world. To think of the Mass primarily in such a light is not particularly useful. Outpourings of astral-etheric forces are not visible to most persons and therefore their existence must be taken on faith by non-clairvoyant priests and congregations alike. On the other hand, if the Mass be considered mainly as a ritual mystery drama portraying the journey of our own Divine Soul on earth, as well as the journey of the Cosmic Divinity in the Universe, this involves far less blind faith and more true Gnosis (inner knowledge) on the part of all involved.

The pages that follow contain therefore no references to forces perceived clairvoyantly. Instead, they show briefly each ceremony and give indications as to its threefold meaning: (1) *As an event in the non-historical Mystery Drama of the life of Jesus*; (2) *As a mystical fact in the individual human soul signified by the dramatic event*; and (3) *As a corresponding cosmic event in the Life of the Universe, which is the Body of God*.

One final observation needs to be made here. The Mass is often referred to, even in the wording of its own ritual, as a “sacrifice.” While this is often taken to signify that the Divinity, both personal and cosmic, sacrifices itself on the altar of manifestation when undergoing a self-imposed limitation in order to share its Divine life with all, the word “sacrifice” reveals to us a yet more personal meaning. The Latin term from which “sacrifice” is derived is made up of *sacer* (holy, sacred) and *facere* (to make, to render). The sacrifice of God on the altar of matter has as its purpose the sanctification, the making holy or whole, of every being and every thing

that is yet incomplete or imperfect in creation.

Similarly the Mass is a drama wherein we are to live through our own *apotheosis*, that is, where we are to become in actual fact shining gods filled with the light and power of the Most High. Man is a child of God, growing so as to become a Son of God. The drama of the Mass is expertly designed to accomplish just that. We must realize that the chief figure of the drama enacted is not the distant, though inspiring figure of the biblical Jesus, but the Christ in us.

St. Paul, the initiate of the non-Christian as well as of the Christian mysteries, so very eloquently said of this figure in his *Epistle to the Colossians*:

He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature... even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but is now manifest to his saints... which is Christ in you, the hope of Glory... and ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principalities and powers; in whom ye are also circumcised... buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God.

Let us, with our hearts, minds, souls and bodies, live the great mystery drama of the Eucharist. May the words in this treatise guide our steps ever so slightly in the direction of the Everlasting Hills whence cometh our help!







# THE HOLY EUCHARIST EXPLAINED

## THE INVOCATION, ASPERGES AND CANTICLE

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

The priest, properly vested, and after saying the pre-Eucharistic prayers, enters the sanctuary, and sets the stage for the sacramental drama. He does this by hailing the Lord of the past, present and future, by purifying the sanctuary with holy water, and by reciting the Canticle, which deals with the foundation of the temple.

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The actions of the priest symbolize the preparation which Jesus, the hero-god, makes in the heaven-world from which he is about to descend into physical incarnation. In his all-knowing wisdom he perceives past, present and future, knowing well the joys and sorrows he will experience for our sakes.

### THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

The individual Divine Soul prepares to enter the world in order to become a human soul for the period of a cycle of manifestation. It knows that it must descend through the mental, emotional and physical regions, and thus it calls on the elemental powers (earth, water, fire, air) to assist in the formation of its vestures. The foundation of the temple is being prepared; that

is, a personality is being formed which will serve as the temple for the indwelling Divine Soul.

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

God the Logos, prepares the field within which manifestation is to take place. The illimitable now prepares to undergo limitation and to enter outer darkness. The creative centers within the field of creation are beginning to stir into potential activity. The golden gates of the heavenly palace are opening to witness the exit of the Monarch of Light, and his descent into the region of the habitation of his subjects.

## THE CONFITEOR, ABSOLUTION, CENSING AND INTROIT

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

Having finished setting the stage, the priest and congregation recall the task of our earthly life: we rise above our shortcomings. The priest then pronounces the divine promise of eventual victory over our lower nature. He then censes the altar and is himself censed, after which, he intones the Introit which deals with the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

Jesus, the hero of the story, has entered the stage of earthly life by being born a man. While incarnate as a man, he is still one with the Father and the Holy Spirit. His Father in Heaven assures him that after much earthly tribulation he will overcome the world and ascend to the Light once more. The sweet fragrance of his divini-

ty pervades the earthly habitation within which he has taken up his residence.

### THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

As with the figure of our hero, so, too with ourselves. When we leave the heaven-world of the Pleroma (fullness), we behold the path of progress mapped out for us in the mind of God. While we become conscious of our newly imposed limitations, we secretly know that we, and the Father who sent us, are ever one. The seven vestures of the Divine Soul, which it has come to inhabit, are symbolized by the censing of the altar cross and of the six candles upon the altar.

### THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

God the Logos, having prepared the field of manifestation, now pours down His manifold life forces. Thus all degrees of matter are brought into being. The process of aeonial blessing commences; no portion of the cosmos is ever without the infused presence of the Divine Light, however dark it might seem. In the fullness of time all matter will become the unspotted mirror of God within which the image of His goodness will be clearly reflected.

## THE KYRIE ELEISON

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

The priest and congregation, in a posture of deep reverence, intone nine times the words "Kyrie Eleison" and "Christe Eleison."

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The hero has left his life of freedom in the Divine Region. He becomes conscious of the great need the world has of him. His prayer becomes a compassionate sigh for the enlightenment of all creatures. The word "eleison" does not mean merely mercy. Therefore we hear Jesus join the chorus of all creatures who are asking for light, crying: "Lord, pour forth Thy grace upon us."

### THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

The individual soul has begun its pilgrimage through life, to attain to perfection by experience. Realizing the stupendous power that is needed to attain to perfection, our personality cries out to the Divine Soul which overshadows it: "Lord, send Thy Light: Indwelling Christ, give me Thy aid!"

### THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

The Kyrie also stands for the universal cry of all Nature, as expressed by the Apostle St. Paul: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain" (Romans viii: 22). Suffering is the universal heritage of all beings when they are separated from their Divine Soul. Thus they call out to the Divine Light for guidance. In time the increase of the Light in the world changes the

note of pain into one of beatific harmony. As more and more creatures awaken to their divine estate, the morning stars begin to sing together and the children of the Eternal shout for joy.

## THE GLORIA

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

The Kyrie being concluded, the priest changes his position before the altar. He then intones the opening words of the Gloria: "Glory be to God in the Highest." He is joined by the people, who make the Sign of the Cross at the conclusion of the chant or recitation.

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem is represented by the priest moving from one position to another before the altar at this time. The Gloria is the angelic chant of the celestial choir at the birth of Jesus. Already, at this early moment, the powers of darkness have risen against the hero of Light, and King Herod orders the Massacre of the Innocents. The crucifixion is foreshadowed in this dark deed, as we are reminded by the making of the Sign of the Cross at the conclusion of the Gloria.

### THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

In response to the sincere request of the personality, the light of the Divine Soul begins to shine more brightly in the human soul. The Angels, that is the messengers of the Mystic Christ in ourselves, appear to us and dazzle us with their splendor and their song. Even

a faint glimpse of the Divine Soul is enough to make us sing its glories for countless ages to come.

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

The intermingling of darkness and light (matter and spirit) makes up the fabric of the cosmos, the checker-board of the world, upon which the divine game is being played. The hierarchies of creative and regenerative intelligences are ever at work in the world. The glorious harmony of their choral song becomes clearly audible as man himself increases in the light.

## THE PRAYERS KNOWN AS COLLECTS

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

The priest once more changes his position at the altar and, with raised hands, recites the prayers known as Collects, two or more in number. In our own Rite this is followed by a dialogue of ancient Gnostic origin, wherein short utterances by the priest are answered with a resounding "Amen" by the congregation.

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The change in the position of the priest reminds us of the flight of the hero-god to Egypt. The hands raised are sometimes taken to signify the manual labors of Jesus in the carpenter's shop. As the labor of the Mass is sanctified by the prayers of the Collects, so were the travels and chores of the young Jesus sanctified by the presence of His Father from heaven. This position is also the ancient attitude of prayer used by the Egyptians centuries and centuries ago. Thus we are reminded that



the succession of the Mysteries stretches back into the mists of time.

### THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

In our search for the Light we must also undertake spiritual, mental, emotional and physical journeys. We must work and toil while molding the material of our personality. While carrying on our daily duties in the world, we lift up our hands and ask for power and guidance from the indwelling Christos, Who responds by reminding us that we must live His mysteries by seeing ourselves in the figure of Jesus in the Mass, and by silently assimilating the power of the mystery in which we are privileged to participate.

### THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

The ascent of all created things to the Light is preceded by their descent into relative darkness. The various elemental essences, of which the cosmos is made, are in various stages of involution and evolution. All things must “travel into Egypt” to gather experience. The entire intricate web of cosmic substance is held together by the Thought of the Logos, symbolized by the Collects.

## THE LESSON ALSO KNOWN AS THE EPISTLE

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

The priest, standing on the right, or “epistle side” of the altar, reads in a loud voice a portion of the Holy Scripture. The Lesson is especially selected as to its contents for each Sunday and holiday; at other times, a permanent text may be used.

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The coming of Jesus is said to have been heralded by several forerunners, the best known of whom was St. John the Baptist. Before the appearance of the hero-god and his addressing the people (Gospel), there are others who inspire the people. The message of these forerunners is symbolized in the lesson, for which reason, in former days, it usually consisted of readings from the Old Testament. Later the readings were taken from the letters of the Apostles, hence the name “Epistle.” Today any inspiring scripture, illustrative of the holy wisdom may be used.

### THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

Before we can see the Indwelling Lord face to face we must undergo a thorough process of purification. Like the forerunner of Jesus, St. John, so we must journey into the wilderness and be stripped of the attachments and fascinations of our previous way of life. Before we can hear the Gospel, or “Good News,” proceeding from the Indwelling Christ, we must have learned to heed the message of the teachers whose role it is to prepare us for that experience.

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

In every age and civilization there were available to those desirous of the Light, sources of inspiration and instruction. Every messenger of the Light serves as forerunner of the next. Thus we must listen with attention and reverence to every true messenger, and simultaneously keep an open mind for the message of the next messenger. Our fathers in Gnosis recognized that before Jesus there were many great teachers, including Seth, Zarathustra and Buddha.

## THE GOSPEL

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

While intoning the Gradual, the priest leaves the epistle side of the altar and proceeds to the extreme left, or gospel side. The gospel book is censed while the priest and people sign their foreheads, lips, and hearts with the Sign of the Cross. The gospel, usually, is taken from one of the accounts of the life of the hero-god, i.e. the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. After the conclusion of the Gospel the people respond by praising Christ, and the priest reminds them to be doers of the Word of the Lord.

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

Jesus begins his career of giving the “good news” to mankind. In order to do this he withdraws from his fellows and fasts in the wilderness. The solemnity of his mission is signified by signs and wonders.

## THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

After having purified the personality we must no longer be content with receiving the Light through secondary sources as we did in the case of the lesson or Epistle. Now the Indwelling Lord speaks to us directly and gives us the certainty of our own innate divinity, which is good news indeed. The voice of our Divine Soul must be listened to with attention and reverence; to it we must offer the incense of our devotion. The Sign of the Cross over the three portions of our body signifies that we must accept and assimilate the inspiration of the Divine Soul with our intellect, manifest it with our lips, and live it in our hearts.

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

The Voice of Universal Divinity is ever heard in nature. There is nothing inanimate in the cosmos. On the contrary, all things constantly proclaim the gospel of eternal power and might; for indeed "His Majesty and Glory fill the universe."

## THE CREDO (CREED) OR ACT OF GNOSIS

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

After the Gospel, the priest turns to the center of the altar and intones the Credo, or Act of Gnosis, being joined by the congregation. In olden times great importance was attached by the dogma-ridden church to the wording of the Credo, but today several shorter and more meaningful statements can be used.

## THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

At this, the half-way point in the Mystery Drama, the participants were reminded in outline form of the substance of its meaning. Thus the Creed often serves as a brief explanation of the true philosophical basis upon which the elaborate drama of the Eucharist is founded.

## THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

In our journey toward the Light we often go astray, mistaking the shadow for the substance. We are thus in frequent need of recalling the nature of our beliefs regarding the purpose of our lives. Right Belief is an important milestone on the path of inner progress. The milestone of the Creed has often become an ugly millstone around the neck of Christendom. This is the reason the traditional creeds, which are replete with the dogmatic rubbish of the centuries, are discarded today.

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

A mature philosophy of life, originating in a natural thoughtfulness, and augmented by the insights and revelations of wise and holy souls, is a potent aid to those who wish to understand the nature and workings of the cosmos. Thus we should recall, from time to time, what we have come to know concerning the cosmic drama in which we appear as actors.

## THE OFFERTORIUM

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

The priest uncovers the sacred vessels, offers the Bread and, after mingling the wine and water, offers the Chalice. He calls on the Holy Name of Christ to descend into the Eucharistic Offerings.

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The Offertorium represents the beginning of the Last Supper, during which the hero of the drama takes bread and wine and distributes it to his disciples. The supreme gift of the hero to his associates was the ritual act of the consecration of bread and wine, left behind as a memorial of his mighty Presence.

### THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

Our body is of earth, our soul of heaven. Both must be offered up to God. The wine represents the Divine Soul in man; the water stands for the personality. The personality must be raised up to be the perfect instrument of the God Within. All that we possess, body, mind and emotions, must be offered to our indwelling Divinity (Christos) so as to render all these vestures fit to serve as vehicles of the Light proceeding from the Divine. Only if we thus offer ourselves without any reservation whatsoever will the "knower of the chosen mysteries" descend into our personality and bring his joy by becoming one with us.

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

The priest offers solid and liquid substances, symbolizing the complex fabric of the universe, consisting of gross and subtle forms of matter. He also mingles wine and water, showing that spirit and matter are blended in all creatures in the universe. As spirit penetrates matter, matter becomes more and more rarefied, until it is finally taken up and returns to the One who sent it forth. The presence of the Divine Spark in all creation will eventually cause all matter to be assumed into the Light. There is nothing unholy in creation, for the Logos ever offers all matter (which is His Body) as the eternal sacrifice.

## THE SECOND CENSING AND THE LAVABO

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

The priest censes the bread and wine three times in the form of a cross and three times in the form of a circle. The altar, priest, assistants and congregation are also censed. During the latter two actions the priest cleanses his hands with water.

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

Three times Mary Magdalene anointed Jesus with perfumed oils "for my burial," as he said, once in the house of Simon the Pharisee, once in the house of Simon the Leper, and lastly at the Holy Sepulchre. The three censings in the form of a cross and circle represent the reverent homage offered by this woman to her (and our) hero. Washings also appear in the story of

the hero, notably his washing of the disciples' feet, and the washing of his own body by the women at the holy sepulchre.

## THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

In our individual lives we must also tread the Way of the Cross. As the incense rises in ever ascending circles over the holy elements of bread and wine, so must our will impel us to ascend 'toward the Divine Light. In order to perform the magnum opus of changing our human nature into the likeness of Divine Nature, we must continue to purify ourselves at every step. The lavabo (washing of the hands) signifies one of these last great tasks of purification.

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

In the universal task of the consecration of all creation, the Logos is ministered to by the innumerable hierarchies of cosmic intelligences, referred to as the Holy Angels. The spirit of the Divine Light and Life is brought to earth by these heavenly hosts who encompass all beings with the Light of everlasting blessing, evoking thoughts of Love and benevolence in the natures of those whom they contact.



## THE ORATE FRATRES, SURSUM CORDA, PREFACE AND SANCTUS

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

After praying for the acceptability of the holy sacrifice, the priest implores the people to lift up their hearts and intones, in a solemn voice, the Preface, which is followed by the Sanctus. This consists of the “thrice holy” call on God and the welcoming statement, beginning with “Blessed is he that cometh.” The Sign of the Cross is made by all at the conclusion of the above.

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The hero enters the Way of the Cross. The tragedy of Calvary is preceded by the entrance of the hero into the city on Palm Sunday. Ingratitude and human fickleness surround him. Those who cry “Hosanna” today will demand his death a few days later. Such is the stability of the faithless world of men.

### THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

While traveling on the path of Light, we are subjected to severe tests of our strength. Will we stand firm and praise our Divine Soul even in the hours of darkness, or will we allow ourselves to fall prey to the tendencies of our lower nature, and curse our Indwelling Lord with the mob? At times our human nature seems temporarily to co-operate with our Divinity, but we must ever remember that human nature can never be trusted, its hosannas being often followed by murderous curses against the designs of our Divine Soul.

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

The opposing forces of involution and evolution are ever present in manifestation, and the struggle between them is a necessary factor in revealing the Infinite within the limitations of time and space. May we always have the insight to perceive the Divine Essence in all things and hail the Holy Lord transforming the heart of the material universe. A Gnostic scripture comes to mind which repeats the words of the Christos: "Raise the stone and thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and I am there."

## INVOCATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, PRAYER OF CONSECRATION, AND COMMEMORATION OF THE SAINTS

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

The priest and people reverently invoke the Holy Spirit for the task of the consecration of the elements. This is followed by the Prayer of Consecration, during which we pray for the living and the dead, and continue to invoke the Divine Light for the purpose of bringing about the consecration, which is the culmination of the Mass. In the Commemoration of Saints we join in consciousness with all those who have followed the path of Gnosis before us.

## THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The hero-god now begins the fateful journey of his passion and death. He agonizes in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, alone. He calls to his Father to unite with him in this terrible hour. This is followed by his

condemnation and passion. The time is drawing nigh when he is crucified and dies for the sake of man.

### THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

There is a point on the mystic path when the Soul has to stand entirely alone, enduring the terrors of the dark night. In our extremity, when we are entirely thrown back upon our own resources, we evoke from the depths of our inner selves the Holy Spirit, or Comforter, who brings about our own consecration. Every man must walk the Way of the Cross. It has been rightly said: "The cross on Calvary thou lookest to in vain, unless within thyself it has been set up again." We must be ready to relinquish our attachment to the personality, allowing it to die a symbolic death, in order to gain the higher life of the Divine Soul. "Whosoever loses his life shall save it."

### THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

The passion of the hero of the Christian Mystery and of every man is a reflection of what takes place eternally in the heavens. The incarnate Godhead dies a thousand deaths on its journey and experiences all our agonies, for we are portions of its Life and Consciousness.

## THE EPIKLESIS, CONSECRATION AND ELEVATION OF THE ELEMENTS

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

The priest extends his hand over the bread and wine, makes the Sign of the Cross several times over the same, and says the words, "This is My Body," and "This is My Blood" over the elements. After the consecration of the host (bread) he kneels, and then raises the host high for all to see, after which he kneels again. The same is repeated after the consecration of the wine. All kneel and sing or recite the verse of adoration, beginning with "Thee We Adore."

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The holding of the priest's hands over the bread and wine, and the Sign of the Cross made thereover, symbolize the crucifixion of Jesus. The elevation of the sacred elements reminds us that the hero-god was raised upon the cross, and that his blood was shed in the Garden of Olives and on numerous other occasions during the passion. The three crosses made by the priest with the host symbolize the three hours spent on the cross by the hero; the two made outside of the chalice symbolize the separation of his Soul from his body.

### THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

Each individual must crucify the lower self and make it the obedient servant of the Divine Soul. No man can serve two masters. In order to increase the indwelling Christ in us, the lower nature must diminish and assume a subordinate position. As the lesser self dies in

us we become irradiated and filled with the Light of the Supreme. Our body, emotions and mind become infused with the essence of the Divine Soul. Thus we become the consecrated body and blood of the Indwelling Lord.

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

The cosmic crucifixion is called to our attention at this time. We are indeed portions of the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." As such we share in the aeonial task of the sanctification of all matter; the world becomes filled with light, as the consecrated elements become filled with Divinity.

## THE BREAKING OF THE HOST AND THE Gnostic's PRAYER

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

Following the consecration and adoration of the elements, the priest prays for all present while making the Sign of the Cross with the consecrated bread several times. He joins in consciousness with the Divine Hierarchies and the Empire of Light and breaks the bread into three fragments, dropping one of these into the chalice. Then all join in the recitation of the Gnostic's Prayer.

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The divided host symbolizes the wound made by the lance in the body of the dying hero-god upon the cross. The Sign of the Cross is made three times with the fragment of the host, indicating the three days spent in the

tomb. The particle placed in the chalice signifies the burial of the hero in the sepulchre. The Gnostic's Prayer is recited to call our attention to the nature and purpose of our earthly journey, brought to its fulfillment by the culminating event of the Mass.

## THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

The neophyte must break asunder his personality, so as to admit the Light of the Divine Soul. The fragment of our Divinity now descends into the chalice of our personality. We and our Divine Father are at last one. We recapitulate the purpose of our existence and pray, in full knowledge of our illumined state, to our Father of All.

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

The fact of the "burial" of the Light in the lowest forms of matter is enshrined in this portion of the Mass. The Seed of Divinity is resident in all created things. It is always to be kept in mind that the Divine Spark is ever desirous of rising from its tomb of matter, and that we ourselves are deeply involved in this cosmic process of the flight of the celestial particles of God back to their Source.

## THE SALUTATION OF PEACE AND THE COMMUNION

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

The priest and people prepare for the communion by glorifying the Holy Trinity. An atmosphere of expectant joy pervades all actions and prayers at this time. The

*Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God) prayer being omitted in our Rite, its place is taken by the reverent prayer, "Unto Thee O Perfect One"; after which, first the priest, and later the people receive the Holy Communion, and meditate upon the Divine Light of which they are now partakers.

## THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The resurrection of the hero-god now takes place. His body and blood being reunited in the chalice, he triumphantly rises out of the tomb and once more enters the world of men, sharing his essence with all. He proceeds to visit his apostles, who are assembled very much as they were at the Last Supper. Now they remember his promise and rejoice over his renewed presence among them.

## THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

Under the outward and visible signs of our lives we must always be conscious of the inward and invisible Divine Presence. Our Divinity is ever eager to share His essence with us in the permanent communion of Illumination. Will we take advantage of the offer of our Indwelling lord and receive Him into our personality? Only by so doing will our entire life be a Holy Eucharist, and every moment a Holy Communion!

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

All things live and move and have their being in the Logos. The Light rises out of darkness in a constant process of resurrection; this is the spiritualizing and uplifting of all matter. All life is linked and kin, and,

in spite of appearances, there exists an underlying communion, or unity, linking all in oneness. All forms of consciousness and life commune with each other, and man is no exception if he can cease from his heresy of separation which rends his personality and Divinity in twain.

## THE COMMUNIO AND CLOSING PRAYERS

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

The priest veils the sacred vessels and reminds the people that while they now have communion with the indwelling and cosmic Christ, under the veil of earthly things, they should consciously strive to manifest His presence in their lives. The people respond with a statement of praise. The priest then recites the closing prayers, extending his arms in the position of minor benediction, saying, "The Lord be with you."

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The risen hero-god shows the wounds on his hands and feet to his disciples. Before his ascension he gives his peace to them. The communion prayers also remind us of the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus, the hero of our drama.

### THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

The enlightened man (he who has reached the mystic resurrection), toils with unremitting devotion to help the world, spreading the message of the Light everywhere. The extended hands and prayers of peace sym-



bolize this sharing and constant service on the part of the Enlightened Ones.

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

The thought of God the Logos sustains and upholds all things. All Light, all Power, all Love is His. By living our lives as a daily sacrament, and by striving constantly to manifest the Christ within, we actually duplicate and exemplify the activity of the Cosmic Christ. From all eternity to all eternity the great Cause of All pours out in abundance those good things which often pass man's understanding. The extended hands of the priest remind us of the great, inexhaustible, causeless Cause which quite literally supplies our physical and spiritual needs from day to day.

## THE DISMISSAL

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

The priest goes to the middle of the altar and with arms extended, says or sings the Latin words, "Ite Missa Est," which is literally translated as, "Go, you are dismissed." Although in the recent revision of the Roman Rite these words were commanded to be said in English, for esoteric reasons they are retained, along with the Greek of the Kyrie Eleison, in the original language of our Rite.

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The journey of Jesus to the Mount of Ascension is symbolized by the priest going to the middle of the altar. "Ite, Missa Est," recalls the words of the hero fig-

ure of the Christian mythos, i.e., Jesus: "I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God." The raised arms of the priest stand for the mystical fact of the ascension, the final event in the life-drama of the hero of the Mass.

## THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

The mystical ascension has several meanings. A very elementary interpretation is that it pertains to the process of the so-called death of man, which is a minor ascension. When we leave the body, and subsequently discard the emotional and mental vestures, we, the Soul, dismiss them so that the elemental essences may return to their original state. Similarly the Soul is dismissed from the scene of incarnation and ascends to the heaven-worlds to await its new descent in a new embodiment. The deeper meaning of the "Ite Missa Est," and with it of the ascension, pertains to the ultimate and final union of the human Soul with the Divine Soul, which is the end and purpose of our existence throughout all our incarnations.

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

As the physical sun takes up from the earth the water (atmosphere) which ascends on high in the form of vapor, so the gross, material elements of manifestation are at the end of the cycle lifted up into the changeless state of bliss in the bosom of the Unknown God. From the Unknown, Unspeakable Absolute all things proceed, and into It all things must return.

## THE FINAL BENEDICTION

### SACRAMENTAL ACTION

The priest, standing erect in full sight of the congregation, and with his right hand raised, pronounces the benediction in the name of the Holy Trinity, making the Sign of the Cross over the assembled people, thus concluding the Eucharist.

### THE MYSTERY DRAMA OF JESUS

The hero has left the stage, and has ascended to the home of his Father Who sent him. Before his departure he told the disciples that he would not leave them comfortless, for he would see to it that the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, would come to them. This event is said to have taken place on the day of Pentecost, which is symbolized in the final benediction.

### THE DRAMA OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

The coming of the Holy Spirit, as symbolized in the final benediction in the Mass, is the mystic culmination of the Eucharist of each individual Soul. Above and beyond the Christ within us, (the Divine Soul), there is another principle or being inhabiting us. This is the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. In the process of the unfolding of our Divine potential, communion, or at-onement with this Spirit is the next step after illumination by the way of the Indwelling Christ. Hence the prophecy of Joachim of flora: "The Age of the Father is passed, the Age of the Son is passing, the Age of the Holy Spirit is approaching." As yet only a few persons of exceedingly high attainment are capable of manifesting this

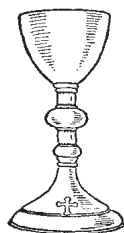
Paraclete, but since their potential is ours as well, one day it shall be said of us as it was said of St. Stephen the Deacon, that he was “filled with the Holy Spirit.”

## THE DRAMA OF THE COSMIC CHRIST

When all life and matter has been uplifted into the Absolute, only one Power remains, brooding over the face of the waters. This is the Third Logos, or Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, whose being will begin manifestation in the cosmic reincarnation of the next cycle. It is thus that at the conclusion of the Mass the Holy Spirit remains with us as a final Presence.

## SACRED VESSELS AND VESTMENTS USED IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

*The Chalice* is the cup in which the priest consecrates, and from which he receives, the consecrated wine during the Holy Mass. The chalice should be gold or silver; the inside being plated with gold. The chalice is dedicated to its purpose by a special consecration at the hands of a bishop. By virtue of its function, the chalice becomes charged with a power of a very high order, and should be treated with care and reverence.



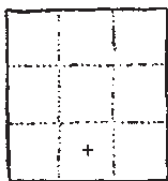
*The Paten* is the plate upon which the priest places the consecrated wafer, known as the Host, which he offers during the Mass. The paten should be of a noble metal, and its upper surface should be plated with gold. With the chalice, the paten is consecrated by a special blessing.



*The Ciborium* is a covered chalice, used to contain the consecrated wafers either for distribution to the congregation or for storing for future use. In the latter case, i.e., when containing the "reserved Sacrament," it should be treated with the greatest reverence and preserved in a safe and secluded place.



## OBJECTS USED FOR THE SACRED VESSELS



*The Corporal*, so called because upon it rests the sacred Body or Corpus, is a piece of linen, spread upon the Altar Stone. Upon this linen the chalice and the Host are placed during the celebration of the Eucharist.



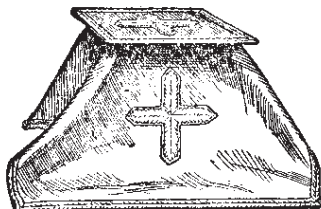
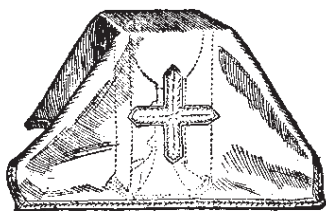
*The Purificator* is a narrow strip of linen used for wiping and drying the sacred vessels as well as the priest's fingers and lips.



*The Pall* is a small stiffened linen square laid upon the chalice as a cover.



*The Chalice Veil and Burse* are the outermost coverings of the sacred vessels. The chalice veil covers the chalice on every side and upon it is placed the burse. Both are usually of the same material as the set of vestments worn by the priest.



# VESTMENTS WORN BY THE CELEBRANT PRIEST



1. The Cassock
2. The Amice
3. The Alb
4. The Cincture
5. The Maniple
6. The Stole
7. The Chasuble

*The Cassock* is a long garment of heavy material, worn by all priests as a distinguishing garb of their office. Clerics of the lesser priestly orders also vest in cassocks when present in the sanctuary. All Eucharistic vestments are worn by the priest over the cassock.

*The Amice* is a biangular piece of white linen worn over the shoulders and tucked into the collar. It symbolizes the helmet of salvation, and is in some rites modified to look like a hood, covering the head when required. It serves the purpose of conducting certain energies from the throat area of the priest outward.

*The Alb* is a white linen vestment with close-fitting sleeves, reaching to within a few inches of the bottom of the cassock. It symbolizes purity.

*The Cincture* is a long belt that holds the alb in place and close to the body of the priest. It symbolizes chastity.

*The Maniple* has the appearance of a small stole and is worn suspended from the left arm. Its symbolic role is that of penance, and it serves as a place where the energies rushing down the left arm are conserved.

*The Stole* is a strip of silk or embroidered material, hung from the shoulders of the priest, its ends being placed on the front of the alb. Priests cross their stole during the celebration of the Mass, Bishops do not. It is the symbol of priestly power, and serves as a powerful conductor of energy.

*The Chasuble* is the most important liturgical vestment of the Mass. It is reserved exclusively for priests (and Bishops) celebrating the Mass. Its shape is oval, and when laid out flat it closely resembles the ancient Christian symbol of the fish. It is the most significant



channel of invisible force used at the Mass. At Solemn High Mass the deacon and subdeacon vest in Dalmatic and Tunicle which resemble a chasuble.

## THE COLORS OF MASS VESTMENTS

The color of the vestments varies with the liturgical season and the feast being celebrated.

*White* is symbolic of purity, joy and innocence. It also represents the plenitude of Divine Power, since it is a synthesis of all colors. It is used for the greatest festivals, such as Easter, Christmas, Ascension, Trinity, for the feasts of the Holy Virgin and of the Angels. Whenever vestments of the other colors are not available it is permissible to use white as a substitute.

*Violet and Black* are the colors of purification, mourning, penance and introspection.

*Violet* is used during the preparatory seasons of Advent and Lent, on Vigils before particular feast days, while black is used at Requiem Masses said for the repose of souls. Black is also used on Good Friday.

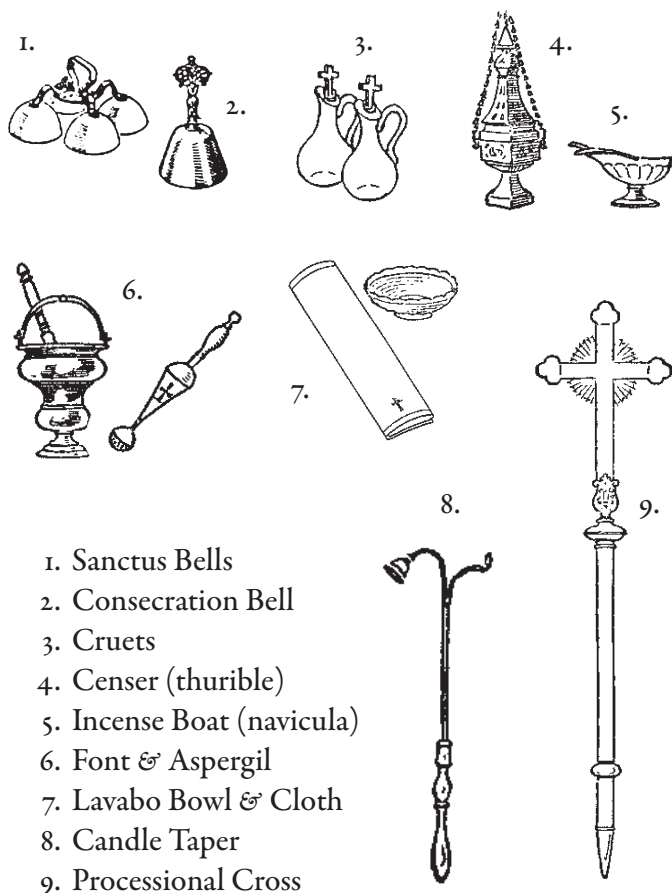
*Red* is the color of love, spiritual power and self-sacrifice. It is used on festivals of the Holy Ghost and on days when martyrs are remembered by the Church.

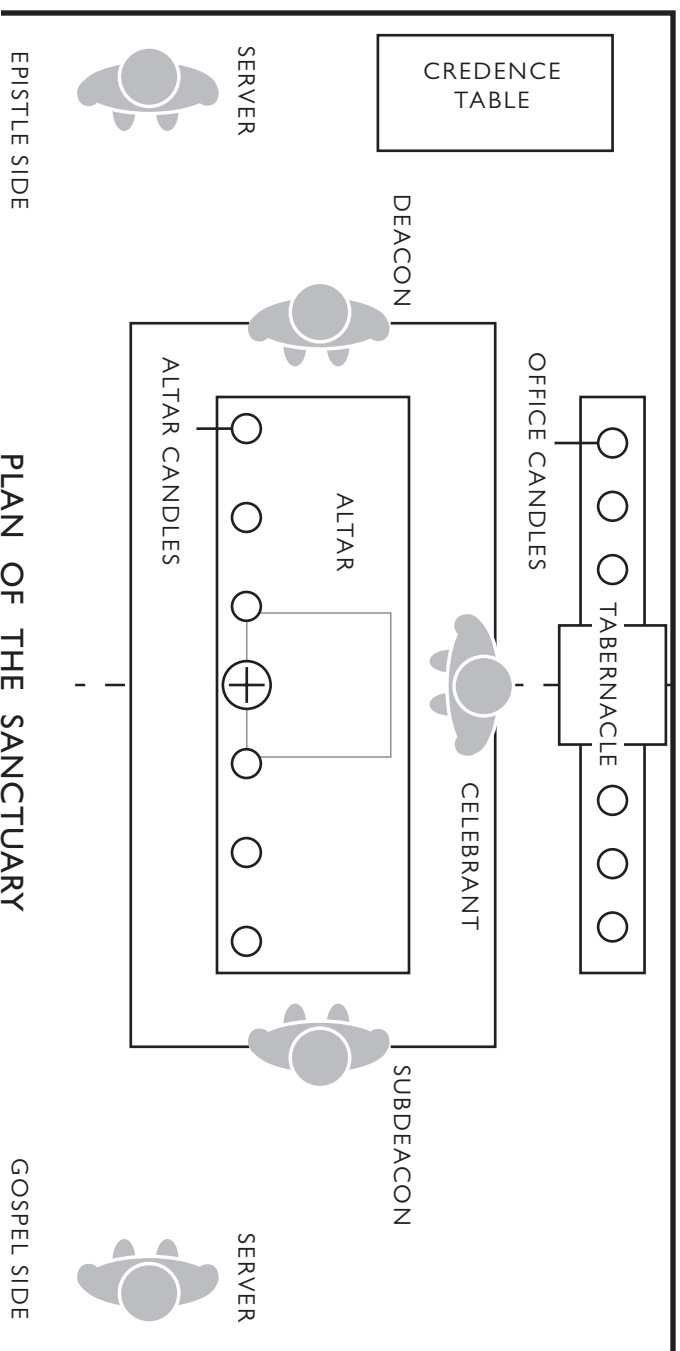
*Green* symbolizes hope, the regenerative forces of Nature, the condition of spiritual growth and evolution. It is used on Sundays after the feasts of Epiphany and Pentecost and on all days when no other colors are prescribed.

*Gold* is a substitute for white, red and green, but not for violet, and is frequently used to show the solemnity of high festivals. It is the color of the Sun, and symbolizes the golden radiance of the Divine Soul.

*Rose* is used on two Sundays out of the year, one in Advent and another in Lent, symbolizing joy in the midst of seasons devoted to purification. It symbolizes controlled affection.

## OBJECTS USED IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST







## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*Absolution:* Ceremonial act, signifying the forgiveness of faults.

*Act Of Gnosis:* A statement of summarized Gnostic religious tenets.

*Alb:* A long white vestment (see “Vestments”).

*Altar:* The Holy Table, upon which the Eucharist is celebrated.

*Amice:* A vestment consisting of a linen neck-piece.

*Asperges (Latin: “Thou shalt sprinkle.”):* Prayers and acts of purification.

*Baptism:* The first Sacrament, or Mystery; a rite of initiation.

*Benediction:* A ceremonial act of blessing persons.

*Burse:* Outermost covering of the Chalice (see “Objects”).

*Candles:* Sacred lights upon the altar. Six are advisable, but a minimum of two is required during the celebration of the Eucharist.

*Canticle:* A short hymn, recited at the beginning of the Eucharist.

*Cassock:* A long garment worn by clergy (see “Vestments”).

*Catholic*: Universal, world-wide. An ancient term, describing the church. The word is not the sole property of the Roman Catholic Church.

*Celebration*: A term denoting the performance of the Eucharist.

*Censer*: A metal pot in which incense is burned. Also called a thurible.

*Censing*: The ceremonial burning of incense. It occurs twice during the Eucharist: first to purify the temple; secondly the offerings.

*Chalice*: The cup used at the Eucharist (see “Sacred Vessels”).

*Chasuble*: A loose vestment worn only for the Eucharist (see “Vestments”).

*Ciborium*: A covered cup to hold the sacramental bread (see “Sacred Vessels”).

*Cincture*: A string, or belt for an alb or cassock (see “Vestments”).

*Collect*: A short prayer, aiming at a single major point.

*Communio*: A prayer recited after the time of communion.

*Communion*: The partaking of the consecrated elements of bread and wine.

*Confiteor* (*Latin*: “*I confess.*”): Ceremonial act of confessing one’s faults.

*Congregation:* A group of people assembled for the purpose of worship.

*Consecration:* A solemn act of blessing; in particular the changing of the bread and wine into the mystical divine substance at the Eucharist.

*Corporal:* A square cloth used on the altar (see “Objects”).

*Credo* (*Latin: “I believe.”*): Creed, or statement of religious beliefs.

*Elements:* In the Eucharist, the bread and wine.

*Elevation:* The holding up of the elements above eye level.

*Epiklesis:* A prayer preceding the consecration of the bread and wine.

*Epistle:* The first reading of scripture. Also known as the Lesson.

*Epistle Side:* The side of the altar where the Lesson, or Epistle is read.

*Eucharist:* The name of the central Christian mystery, at which the bread and wine are transformed, and distributed. It is derived from the Greek word for “Thanksgiving.” In the Roman Catholic Church it is usually known as the “Mass.”

*Genuflection:* A brief bending of one or both knees toward the center of the altar; usually when the consecrated elements are present.

*Gloria:* A song of praise, recited during the Eucharist. According to legend it is based on the angelic song of praise at the birth of Christ.

*Gnosis* (Greek: “Knowledge.”): Defined as the “knowledge of things that are,” or the insight into the authentic nature of life.

*Gnosticism:* The philosophy of aspiration toward the true knowledge of the mysteries of existence. Historically, the religious-philosophical teachings of the schools of early Christian mystical thought.

*Gospel:* “Good News.” Sacred scriptures, dealing mainly with the life story of the hero god of the Christian mythos. Such comprise the second reading of scriptures at the Eucharist.

*Gospel Side:* The side of the altar at which the gospel is read.

*Gradual:* Prayers recited between the Lesson and the Gospel.

*Host* (Latin: “Victim.”): The bread, or round wafer of the Eucharist.

*Intone:* To chant or recite in an audible voice.

*Introit* (Latin: “Entering.”): The prayer of entering the sanctuary.

*Invocation:* In the Eucharist, the initial calling upon the Holy Trinity.



*Ite Missa Est* (Latin: “Go, you are dismissed.”): The words of dismissal at the end of the Eucharist, addressed to men and the angel host.

*Kyrie Eleison* (Greek: “Lord have mercy,” meaning *disputed.*): Ancient and potent formula, containing a twin phrase “Christe eleison.”

*Lavabo* (Latin: “I wash.”): Prayers recited at the cleansing of the hands of the priest, prior to the consecration.

*Liturgy*: Greek term for the Eucharist. Also used to describe a compendium of all other sacramental actions and words.

*Magic*: An act of invoking or evoking spiritual forces in conformity with will.

*Maniple*: A vestment, worn on the left arm of the priest (see “Vestments”).

*Mass*: Name in common use, describing the Eucharist. Derived from “Missa” in the statement of dismissal.

*Mystery*: A spiritual fact transcending human comprehension.

*Offerings*: In the Eucharist, the elements of bread and wine.

*Offertorium*: Prayers said at the time of offering the elements.

*Orate Fratres* (Latin: “Pray, Brethren.”): Call to prayer before the consecration.

*Orders, Holy:* The sacrament which confers spiritual powers on persons chosen for sacred functions, such as deacons, priests and bishops.

*Pall:* The linen cover for the chalice (see “Objects”).

*Paten:* A plate, designed to hold the bread of the Eucharist (see “Vessels”).

*Post-Communio:* Prayers recited before the ending of the Eucharist.

*Preface:* A solemn prayer, intoned at the beginning of the most important portion of the Eucharist.

*Priest:* Latin: Presbyter. A minister, ordained to administer the Sacraments. Only those ordained to the priesthood can celebrate the Eucharist.

*Purificator:* A strip of linen designed to clean the chalice (see “Objects”).

*Rite (Latin: “Ritus.”):* A form of practicing magical or religious ceremonies. There are two main Christian rites: Eastern and Western. The Gnostic rite is Western, with some modifications.

*Sacrament:* An outward and visible sign of an inward spiritual grace.

*Sanctuary:* The sacred portion of a church or chapel where the altar stands.

*Sanctus (Latin: “Holy.”):* The prayer-exclamation at the end of the preface.

*Stole:* A strip of silk or other material worn by the clergy in major orders (see “Vestments”).

*Surplice*: A white vestment worn by the clergy while assisting at the Eucharist or while performing other sacred functions.

*Sursum Corda* (Latin: “Lift up your hearts.”): Call to the congregation to raise its level of consciousness before the preface.

*Theology*: The so-called science about God and divine things.

*Theosophy*: The wisdom of God, or of the Gods. A neoplatonic word for Gnosis.

*Theurgy* (Greek: “Divine Work.”): The working of miracles. Bringing about a manifestation of divinity on earth.

*Veil*: The outer covering of the chalice (see “Objects”).

*Vestment*: An ecclesiastical garment worn for church services. Equivalent of the temple robe or magical robe.

*Wafer*: A thin disk of unleavened bread used for communion. The customary form of bread used at the Eucharist in the Western rite.

## NOTE

The references in the glossary to “Vessels,” “Objects,” and “Vestments” pertain to the explanatory portion following the chapter “The Eucharist Explained,” and itself entitled “Sacred Vessels and Vestments in the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist.”



# THE GNOSIS OF THE EUCHARIST

PERHAPS THE MOST important truth we must remember and constantly keep in the forefront of our consciousness is the fact that *Gnosis deals with the mysteries of being and that the mysteries are comprehended mystically* and in no other way.

The failure of modern occultism in the West to deal with the operative aspect of its philosophy can be largely traced back to the inability of the average Western intellectual to practice mystical modes of apprehension. Modern occultism, having had its re-birth in the Western world in the 19th Century (1875), still bears the imprint of 19th Century thinking, which is materialistic and hyper-intellectual. The result is that the present generation of occult and metaphysical students is excessively attached to books, lectures, classes and the like, but has little or no interest in the practical application of occult teaching either in the emotional or in the physical world.

It is no doubt true that certain philosophical and moral concepts and precepts, if held long enough in the mind, will filter through into the emotions and influence somewhat the physical world of concrete action, but the state of the world and of the occult students in general indicates that this is by no means an adequate process. It is not adequate for the accomplishment of what the late Carl Jung called "individuation" and "integration," and what the wise men of old called the "Great Work."

This bias against the practical in favor of the merely theoretical and intellectual, is the reason why so many persons within the occult and metaphysical field can see no use for ceremony, ritual, prayer and similar practices, and why they tend to dismiss such activities as being unworthy of a student of the deeper side of life. But it is a sad truth that a simple Italian peasant who is able to stir up within his inner being the holy power of true devotion and adoration in his village church is assuredly closer to the truth than the intellectual occultist, attending countless lectures and reading innumerable books about various and sundry involved occult teachings.

We do not mean to imply that it is desirable for students to abandon their study and regress into a state of superstition. What we must realize is that occultism cannot and must not be confined to and fixated within the mind, or intellect, as seems to occur in the majority of instances in our civilization. If modern Western occultism is to redeem itself from this state of bondage to intellectualism it *must learn to appreciate the theurgic value of authentic religious rituals.*

Ritual, provided it uses authentic symbols, is in fact no more and no less than concretized truth. The great and sad problem is that whenever truth is made concrete there exists a certain danger that it may degenerate into superstition. H. P. Blavatsky defined superstition as truth materialized, thereby implying that underneath every superstition there is a hidden kernel of truth which has been covered up by layers of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. In fact, the very word superstition tells the story quite well: *Super* (Latin),

meaning above, or over, and *stitio*, (Latin, from *sto*, *stare*) to stand. Thus *superstition* is that which stands over or above the truth, hiding it, but being based upon it at the same time.

In our Gnostic studies of the Christian Mysteries (Sacraments), we intend to free this kernel of truth from the accretions of human error which have been permitted to obscure it. Unlike the materialistic rationalist or the hyper-intellectual occultist, the gnostic has no inclination to throw the baby out with the bath-water; rather he rescues the pearls which a self-seeking and materialistic priestcraft cast before the swine beginning with the fateful Third Century. Our interest in the Mass, or Eucharist is motivated by this desire and endeavor.

In this chapter we will deal with a few separate approaches to this, the greatest of the Christian Mysteries. Some of these approaches are contradictory to each other, while others tend to complement one another and still others will appear but as re-statements of the same basic truths in a different language. The reasons for this are many, but the reason for the multiplicity of approaches is in reality far less important than their existence itself, and the meaningful conclusions we may derive from them. Thus we shall now enumerate some of these views.

1. *The Dogmatic View* of the Church after the Third Century regards the Eucharist as the commemoration of the Lord's Supper, wherein Jesus is said to have blessed the bread and wine, and admonished the disciples to "Do this in remembrance of me." The implications

drawn by the theologians from the story of the Last Supper of Jesus are many and astonishing. The founder of Christianity is supposed to have literally changed the bread and wine into his own body and blood, conferred the power on his disciples to repeat this process whenever they wished, and given them the power to pass this ability on to their successors, who in turn would pass it on again, *ad infinitum*, or until the end of the world. Thus the ritual of the Mass is still regarded by the majority of Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox.

2. *The Mass as an act of a Sacred Mystery Drama* is occasionally alluded to by the more daring theologians, but it is essentially a “pagan,” or in fact, Gnostic idea. The mysteries of the ancients, the Greeks, Romans, and the Egyptians, were elaborately devised ritual plays so contrived as to intensify the spiritual growth of the initiate, i.e. a person entering the school of the mysteries. These plays were usually patterned after the mythological story of the life, death and resurrection of the particular deity to whom the mystery was dedicated. The candidate very often was made to undergo symbolically certain events in the life of the hero of the drama, as indeed is still the case in the initiation rituals of Freemasonry, particularly that of the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, in which the candidate is identified with the hero of the Masonic mythos, Hiram Abiff.

It takes but a small amount of imagination, and not very much more study, to distinguish in the present-day Mass the elements of the ritual drama, wherein the life, death resurrection and ascension of Jesus are symbolically re-enacted by the priest and participants. The fact



that the Eucharist, or Mass is a pictorial dramatization of the life of Jesus was recognized by prominent churchmen throughout history, notably by Pope Innocent III. The Gnostic interpretation of this idea is that this is undoubtedly true, but that the Christ also stands for the Divine Man resident in every human being; that the Mass was indeed instituted by the Logos at His descent to earth unto Jesus of Nazareth, who Himself is a great, unfathomable mystery to us and who gave us mysteries to perpetuate.

When stating this we must always remember the cardinal tenet of the gnostic view regarding myths, which is entirely in agreement with the psychology of C. G. Jung, namely that *myth is truer than history*, because myths portray the timeless happenings within the soul, while history describes, usually inaccurately, the sporadic happenings and fumbling acts of mortal men within the world of shadows.

In this respect it may be helpful to recall that the ancients distinguished between three great classes of beings: (1) mortal men, (2) heroes, and (3) gods. The second of these classes is one which ought to interest us here most, for Jesus definitely belongs to this category. A hero is a man, who becomes a god by way of apotheosis, i.e. transformation. His heroic qualities elevate him so far above the state of mere humanity that he enters the kingdom of the gods. This is precisely what appears to have happened to the obscure Jewish rabbi, around whose life the gospels were spun, yarn-like, by clever myth-makers throughout the centuries.

Thus Jesus, the hero, became Christ, the god. It has happened before, and no doubt shall happen again.

When understood from a Gnostic point of view it is all very natural, and when ritually manifest in the drama of the Eucharist it is of very great transforming value to the aspirant toward Gnosis.

3. *The Mass as Magic* is a difficult and perilous concept, but it is still a very important element in the understanding of this great mystery. Magic is associated in the common mind with trickery and primitive superstition, but of course it is much more than that. As far as the Mass, or Eucharist is concerned, *Magic is the operational effect of the myth upon the participants*. By this definition the Magic of the Mass exists and cannot be denied. On the other hand, if we restricted ourselves to the magical view of the Mass entirely we would be in the same position as a person who described the combustion engine as noise, stink and speed. What, then, is the Magic of the Eucharist?

First of all it is the gradual accomplishment of the apotheosis of man. Man becomes a god by partaking of the divine substance and by re-living the events in the life of the hero. He becomes one with the god by communing with him. In this respect it makes little difference whether the participant stands at the altar or sits in the pews; he is there for the purpose of being consecrated, transformed, transubstantiated himself. This is the *High Magic*, Theurgy, of the Mass.

As to the lower magic, that of course is also present. It manifests in many ways. Prayers are said for the living, the dead, for particular intentions, for personal problems, for the healing of soul and body. Many persons come to the Mystery in order to pray for something or

someone. Is this wrong? No. On the other hand, if they come *only* in order to obtain certain favors from deity, then they limit the extent and degree of grace they might receive, and ultimately they will miss the true significance of the mystery entirely.

True prayer is prayer of adoration and contemplation: only the lower, personal aspects of prayer have to do with asking for something. Many persons regard God as some sort of gigantic, celestial milk-cow, forever to be tapped for something through prayer. Still, the power of prayer is great, as attested to by the great and wise in every age. The Mass can be utilized for the purposes of personal prayer, but only within certain circumscribed limits, lest it become a forum for petty concerns, and degenerate into a venture in triviality.

A fascinating effort regarding the Magic of the Mass has been made by the late Theosophist and bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, C. W. Leadbeater, in his large work, *The Science of the Sacraments*. This clairvoyant gentleman described in very great detail the character of his visions, which revealed to him a bewildering multiplicity of forces and beings involved in the Mass, and he appeared to come to the conclusion that the Mass was chiefly a ceremony wherein occult power was generated and distributed to the world.

While this interesting idea has found many adherents among modern occult students, it also has some very apparent inadequacies. To go to the Mass in order to switch on, as it were, a tap for some sort of astral shower bath would be a silly and sacrilegious attitude indeed. In fact, Bishop C. W. Leadbeater himself has vigorously condemned this thinking. Nevertheless, too

much attention being given to the alleged psychic, or occult mechanism of the Mass does very frequently lead to such superstitious and utterly unworthy attitudes. Also, how can we be sure that the forces described by the good bishop really exist and operate in the manner indicated? Unless we can duplicate the feats of his clairvoyance, we cannot. Also he may have exercised what in the East is known as Kriyashakti, the psychic power to create occult forms and forces conforming to his conscious or unconscious desires. The results of so-called clairvoyant research may be taken into account by the gnostic, but they should be regarded as so much helpful but unessential information regarding the details of a process and event, the true grandeur of which transcends clairvoyance as much as it does the ordinary physical senses.

4. *The Mass as Mystery.* Finally we must allude to this most important view. Words cannot describe, thoughts cannot penetrate, senses cannot perceive the true character of the *mysterium tremendum* enacted on the altar. Only the still mind, the reverent emotion, and the pure will directed toward the goal of divine union can bring us closer to the holy secret that blazes forth at the center of the Mystery. Myths may bring us nearer, magic may illustrate, philosophy may elucidate, but the Mystery remains, as it must, for it is in us, and we in it.

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE MASS

## THE JUNGIAN VIEW

THE LATE C. G. JUNG, in his universal effort of informing mankind concerning the realities of the soul, has repeatedly referred to the sacraments by stating that the Catholic churches are the only ecclesiastical bodies within the Christian framework who still represent a complete way of religious experience, because they preserved the sacramental system, which lends psychological validity to their religious activities. Jung has also most explicitly gone on record concerning the Mass itself, in his great essay, "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass" (*Eranos Yearbooks Vol. 2, "The Mysteries,"* Bollingen Series, Pantheon 1955). Our present review is largely based on this essay, from which numerous quotations will be given.

We must remember that Jung was chiefly dealing with the Roman Catholic Mass as he came to know it, and he was not aware of any attempt, such as is being made today, to restore the Mass to a form more closely resembling what may have been its original Gnostic character. Nevertheless, it was Jung's contention that in spite of the accumulated dogmatism and misunderstanding of the ages, the underlying true essence of vital mystery was still present within the framework of the sacraments and of the Mass in particular:

“The ritual act (i.e. the Mass) consecrates both the gift and the givers. It commemorates and represents the Last Supper which our Lord took with His disciples, the whole Incarnation, Passion, death and resurrection of Christ. But from the point of view of the divine, this *anthropomorphic* action is only the outer shell or husk in which what is really happening is not a human action at all but a divine event.” (p. 314, *op. cit.*)

Jung emphasizes that psychologically it is quite evident that everyone and everything involved in the mystery is a *ministering cause* of the divine event. The priest does not cause the mystery, he is merely a minister of grace or of power, and so is the congregation, as well as the seemingly inert substances of bread and wine themselves. The Mass is not an action executed by men, but by divinity.

If we are to look once again upon this matter from the point of view of the classical terminology of magic, we must remember that there are two kinds of magic: Low Magic, originating with human consciousness, and High Magic originating in Divine Consciousness or Being. Whenever an individual human consciousness of its own volition, and for motives of its own, decides to perform a magical act, we are dealing with low magic. Whenever, on the other hand, man mystically senses that divinity is desirous of manifesting through man, and he yields to this divine impulse, thus becoming merely the ministering agency of divinity, then we are dealing with High Magic, or as the ancients called it, divine magic, or Theurgy. According to Jung, the Mass, when properly understood, is definitely of this

latter variety, i.e. it is divine or High Magic:

“Wherever the (low) magical aspect of a rite tends to prevail, it brings the rite nearer to satisfying the individual ego’s blind greed for power, and thus breaks up the mystical body of the Church into separate units. Where, on the other hand, the rite is conceived as the action of God Himself, the human participants have only an instrumental or ‘ministering significance.’”  
(p.315, *op.cit.*)

Jung goes on to state that the lesser, or human consciousness, symbolized by the priest and the congregation, is confronted with a situation which is autonomous, i.e. independent of human action. Divinity and its sacrificial mystery *exists* on a plane that is timeless and that transcends consciousness as humans know it. It impels man to act as a priest, or minister of grace, by seizing upon him as an instrument and making him an exponent in time, and in humanity of an event which is in reality timeless and divine.

Once again we are confronted with the immense psychological insight and wisdom of Jung. How different is this attitude from the prosaic, humdrum interpretation of the Mass offered by those who can see in it nothing more than the commemoration of an event in time and space, i.e. the alleged event of the celebration of a supper by Jesus and his disciples. And on the other hand, how different is this interpretation from the one toward which the modern theosophical and pseudo-gnostic schools gravitate so powerfully; namely that the Mass is somehow the conjuring of divine power by the will and operation of certain persons qualified to do

so; the “bringing through, or down” of a power from on high. Between the extremes of a purely historical, and entirely (low) magical interpretation, we can find an illumined psychological view which is replete with the most powerful mechanism of self-protection available to any practitioner of magic, namely the quality of *humility*.

In the action of the Mass we are tools, not operators or manipulators of divine power. We offer ourselves in humility and purity as instruments of and for a high and holy purpose. We do not allow ourselves the dangerous luxury of imagining even for a moment that we, human beings, are performing the mystery. We come to recognize that the mystery is working through us. We do not presume to know either intellectually or in any other way the character of the act of which we are privileged to be the instrumentalities. It is all a mystery and a miracle, and this is its greatest and most significant virtue. Jung says that since man is a tool in the hand of divinity during the Mass, he is no position to know anything about the hand which guides him. “The hammer cannot discover within itself the power which makes it strike” (Jung). What seizes and moves man in the mystery of the Mass, or any other mystery, is something outside humanity; a sovereign power, as free from human limitation as the light is free from darkness. The ordinary, human consciousness cannot find anything within itself that would cause man to perform a mystery. It can only do so when it is seized by the mystery.

All of this brings up a most important point worthy of the attention of each and every gnostic student. What is true concerning the Mass is also true regarding



our entire field of studies and endeavors. On the one hand there is incontrovertible evidence that Gnosticism recognizes the divinity of man; that it regards not only Jesus Christ, but *every man* as an incarnation of the most high. On the other hand Jung, as well as other gnostics of the past and the present, assure us that if we are not *very careful* with this idea, we may easily fall victim to an inflation of the ego, the wrong identification of our unenlightened, mortal self with the immensity of super-personal divinity, and various forms of severe mental disturbance and insanity may ensue. Religion was rightly fearful of the condition in the mind of an individual, which boldly asserts: "I am God." Witness the alleged execution of Jesus for blasphemy, and the crucifixion of the Sufi sage Al-Hallaj by Sultan Saladin, to use but two examples.

Jung recognizes this dichotomy, which he actually calls the "dichotomy of god," and he wisely says that the very figure of Jesus already embodies this paradox. Thus we find Jesus already saying in John (10:30, 14:9) "I and the Father are one. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Yet, on the cross, Christ cries out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" While many an esoteric student simply cannot abide with this dichotomy, and thus comes to the denial of the veracity of one or the other of these statements, Jung, like his Gnostic spiritual ancestors centuries ago, regards this paradox as containing the supreme truth of life and of being.

Christ is the prototype of every man. In the words of St. Paul, he is the "image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature." As in Christ there are two natures (to use the quaint terminology of theology), as

he is said to be “very God and very man,” so also within ourselves there exist two natures, one fallen and one elevated, one the slave of outer darkness, the other a free being of light.

Man is both remote from and near to God at the same time. On the one hand we are all suffering from the greatest alienation, the greatest estrangement, the “heresy of separation”; while on the other hand there dwells within us a portion of the free and eternal one who is forever one with all that is holy, great and good throughout all the aeons beyond them.

The dazzling spark of the divine lives in the outermost darkness. When viewed from without it appears clothed in darkness, having assumed some of the likeness of this darkness. From the central flame the sparks of our indwelling divinity have come forth and they partake of two aspects: they have a “sparkness” (separate existence) and a “flameness” (unitary existence) at the same time. The important thing to remember is that *neither of these is an illusion*. Materialism would tell us that our unitary being is an illusion, a wish-fulfillment. Extreme spiritual philosophy, such as certain interpretations of the “Maya” doctrine of Hindu thought, and some of the Western cults, including Christian Science and much “New Thought,” would tell us that matter is an illusion, that there is no darkness, only light, and more light. These two points of view are each sides of the self-same coin, and when viewed as the complete truth in themselves become a falsehood.

The gnosis, both in its ancient expression, and in its modern psychological guise in the presentation of Jung, gives us a view of man that is free from these two dis-

torted and distorting extreme positions. When the spiritual power (*nous*) fell into the dominion of the lower world (*physis*) it assumed the dark form of the Serpent of the earth. In the later, Manichean form of the gnosis, the fallen man, i.e. “original” or unredeemed man, actually became the Evil One. Yet, the relentless desire of this fallen being is to redeem itself and to reunite itself with its glorious “twin” in heaven. It is precisely at this point that the *mystery* of the Mass comes to play its most important part. MAN MUST SEEK HIMSELF AND WILL FIND HIMSELF ONLY THROUGH ABSOLUTE SELF-SURRENDER. He must offer the bread and wine of his own physical and emotional nature to a power from above, so it may be transformed into the likeness and indeed the very substance of the wholly other, the alien god. The One above and beyond all the aeons, who in some mysterious way is still our own true, inmost self. *God in man, returns to himself in the Sacrificial act of the mystery.* As Jung expresses it:

“The dichotomy of God into divinity and humanity and his return to himself in a sacrificial act hold out the comforting doctrine that in man’s own darkness there is hidden a light that shall once again return to its own source, and that this light actually wanted to descend into the darkness in order to deliver the Enchained One who languishes there, and lead him to light everlasting.” (p.317. *op.cit.*)

This return is not an act that can ever be performed by the lesser human consciousness. All that appertains to this lesser man is to offer himself as an instrument, an offering upon the altar of light. Self-surrender leads

to Self-discovery, and the repetition of the divine death (incarnation) leads to resurrection and ascension. Such is the psychology of the great Christian Mystery, the psychology of the mystery that was in the beginning and shall be completed in us.

## AFTERWORD

THE FOREGOING TREATISE was written in the 1960s and was revised in the early 1970s; its purpose being to assist persons of Gnostic orientation in understanding the Holy Eucharist. Some twenty years have elapsed since those turbulent and creative years, and with the passage of time, the spiritual needs of the culture and the tasks of contemporary Gnosticism have changed also. While at that earlier time it seemed most important that Gnostic Christians make known those features of their tradition which distinguish it from mainstream Christendom, today it seems imperative to emphasize not only those things which divide, but also to recognize those that unite. Thus, some emphases present in this work are now in need of a certain clarification, which the author intends to give to the reader in the following summary:

1. The author has no intention of minimizing the truth and the salvific import of the incarnation and earthly mission of Jesus the Christ. At the same time he stands by his position that the largely literal and historical emphases of non-Gnostic Christianity concerning Jesus must be set off against the mystical and cosmic interpretation present in the Gnostic tradition.
2. The seven historical sacraments, including the Holy Eucharist are held in common by all sacramental Christians, whether Gnostic or mainstream. For this

reason, the Gnostic Holy Eucharist explained in this work is in all essentials conforming to the time-honored usage of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church (Western rite) throughout the ages. To tamper with the “matter and form” of the sacraments, either in order to make them more distinctly non-mainstream, or in order to satisfy the innovative fever of the times is regarded as counter-productive by the author, who agrees wholeheartedly with the words of C. C. Jung: “A ritual must be done according to tradition, and if you change one little point in it, you make a mistake. You must not allow your reason to play with it.” (The Symbolic Life)

3. The author nourishes the merciful hope that the time may come when the Gnostic tradition may be restored to the main body of sacramental Christendom and thus bring about a restoration of wholeness in the mystical body of Christ, which is the One Church, Interior, Invisible, secret and universal. The stone that the builders rejected needs to become the cornerstone once more. Only then will the Christian dispensation arrive at its point of fulfillment. If the treatise *The Mystery and Magic of the Eucharist* can contribute even slightly to the realization of this hope, then the labors of its author will have been more than greatly rewarded.

✠ Stephan A. Hoeller

Sophia Gnostic Center  
Hollywood, California  
Feast of Corpus Christi, 1989

A. M. D. G.

